



# MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # 006-2006

## LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor David Dermer and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: January 4, 2006

SUBJECT: BI-WEEKLY UPDATE— Weeks of December 19 and December 26, 2005

The purpose of this LTC is to provide you with an update describing some of the areas the Administration has recently been focusing on:

**Emergency Management** -- On Monday, December 19, Miami Beach Police Department (MBPD) and Miami Beach Fire Department including Ocean Rescue responded to the Chalk's Ocean Airways seaplane crash which took place at 2:37pm in the east and south side of Government Cut. MBPD representatives secured the land area near the crash site and assisted Miami Beach Ocean Rescue, Miami Dade Fire Department, Miami Dade Police Department and United States Coast Guard at the crash site.

I, along with Chief Don De Lucca and Chief Floyd Jordan, held an on-site press conference immediately after the area was secured and specific information was available for dissemination to the media. In the days following this tragic event, the Administration facilitated information to the media regarding the City's role in the emergency response effort as well as cooperated with local, state and federal authorities to ensure all the information was available to investigators.

The rapid response time of City of Miami Beach Police Department, Fire Department and Ocean Rescue Division was highlighted by the media as well as eyewitnesses, and by all accounts, our City's first responders performed their duties in an outstanding and capable manner.

**Cirque du Soleil** — On December 19, 2005, staff and I met with Maria Sastre, Chairwoman of the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) to discuss various issues including the GMCVB, Convention Development Tax, Convention Center Expansion, Cirque du Soleil as well as convention business opportunities and hotel room availability.

**Holiday Courtesy Notice (Parking Enforcement)** – In keeping with the holiday spirit, the Administration once again provided a one (1) hour grace period at expired meters. The vehicle operators were advised of this courtesy through a holiday courtesy notice placed on their windshields in lieu of a parking citation. This courtesy was extended to all on-street and off-street metered parking spaces from December 19-26, 2005.

**Flamingo Park Playground/Tot Lot Ribbon Cutting** — The Parks and Recreation Department hosted the ribbon cutting for the new \$185,000 playground at Flamingo Park on December 20, 2005. Thanks to the Miami Beach G.O. Bond Program and a grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Recreation Development Assistance Program, this new facility includes three times more opportunities for fun than the older equipment. The new playground includes areas and activities for specific ages, swing sets, and a rock-climbing wall. This is just one of several improvements planned for Flamingo Park in the near future.

**MBPD and Fire Department Toy Drives** — On December 21, 2005 the Miami Beach Police and Fire Departments hosted their Annual Holiday Toy Giveaway. Through their hard work and effort, these Departments were able to make a difference in the lives of hundreds of children who participated in these events.

**Building Official Recruitment Process** — Since the Building Assessment Center Process on December 8, 2005, I have continued to evaluate and move forward on the recruitment efforts for City's next Building Director.

**South Pointe Park Dog Beach** — I met with Commissioner Saul Gross and representatives of the local civic group "Responsible Dog Owners of Miami Beach" on December 27<sup>th</sup> at South Pointe Park in order to discuss issues and concerns regarding dog access to the beach at the park.

**Major Events Plan (MEP)** — The City of Miami Beach proved to be prepared for the New Year's Celebrations throughout the City. New Year's Eve Weekend was by all accounts a success. Hotel occupancy was very high throughout the entire weekend. The skies lit up with free fireworks over Ocean Drive, courtesy of the City of Miami Beach and Ocean Drive Association, as the City welcomed 2006. The City also enhanced staffing levels during the holiday weekend. A 24-hour hotline, 305-673-7400, was operational throughout the weekend.

**5<sup>th</sup> Street & Alton Development Project (Potamkin Site)** — On December 30, 2005, I met with Jeff Berkowitz as well as City staff in a continued effort to discuss construction costs for the project.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

JMG/dm

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